

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
20 October 2005 (20.10.2005)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 2005/098821 A3

(51) International Patent Classification⁷: **G10L 19/00**

(21) International Application Number:
PCT/IB2005/051037

(22) International Filing Date: 25 March 2005 (25.03.2005)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
04101405.1 5 April 2004 (05.04.2004) EP
04102863.0 22 June 2004 (22.06.2004) EP

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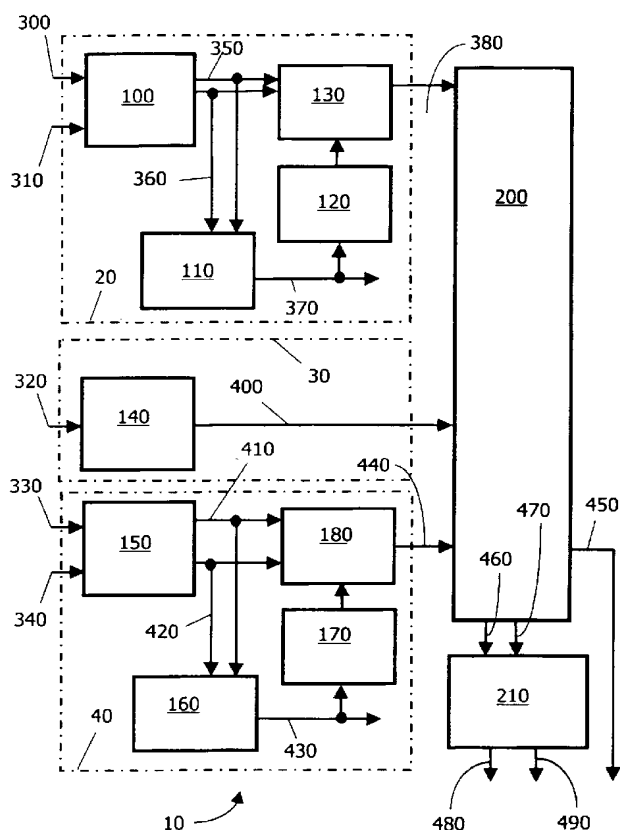
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(81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NA, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SM, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, NA, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI,

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(54) Title: MULTI-CHANNEL ENCODER



(57) Abstract: There is described a multi-channel encoder (10) for processing input signals (300, 310, 320, 330, 340) conveyed in N input channels to generate corresponding output signals (480, 490) conveyed in M output channels together with complementary parametric data (370, 430, 450); M and N are integers wherein $N > M$. The encoder (10) includes a down-mixer for down-mixing the input signals (30, 310, 320, 330, 340) to generate the corresponding output signals (480, 490), the encoder also comprising an analyser for processing the input signals (300, 310, 320, 330, 340) to generate the parameter data (370, 430, 450), said parametric data describing mutual differences between the N channels of input signal to allow for regenerating during decoding one or more of the N channels of input signals from the M channels of output signal. Such an encoder (10) is capable of providing highly efficient data encoding and also of being backwards compatible with relatively simpler decoders having fewer than N decoding output channels. The invention also concerns decoders compatible with such a multi-channel.

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FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, MC, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Declaration under Rule 4.17:

- as to applicant's entitlement to apply for and be granted a patent (Rule 4.17(ii)) for the following designations AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NA, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SM, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, UZ, VC, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW, ARIPO patent (BW, GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, NA, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM,

AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, MC, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG)

Published:

- with international search report

(88) Date of publication of the international search report:

16 March 2006

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.